



# Piedmont Health District

Serving the counties of Amelia, Buckingham,  
Charlotte, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Nottoway, and Prince Edward

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## Breast Cancer: Get the FACTS

**Myth:** Breast cancer has become an epidemic of young women.

**FACT:** Breast cancer will effect 1 out of every 9 women. 95% of all breast cancer cases, though, occur in women 40 years and older. 77% of all breast cancer cases occur in women 50 and older.

**Myth:** Women without a family history of breast cancer are not at risk.

**FACT:** Most women diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history.

**Myth:** Underwire bras and underarm antiperspirants cause cancer.

**FACT:** No studies have found that antiperspirants or wearing any type of bra causes cancer.

**Early detection is the best protection.** All women should do a breast self-exam every month and get a clinical breast exam from their doctor or nurse practitioner each year. Women over 40 need a mammogram at least every other year and every year after age 50.

Free breast exam instructions are available at each of the seven County Health Departments in the Piedmont Health District.

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## Spotlight on Our Staff...

**Barbara M. Jackson,**  
**Assistant Director for**  
**Prevention Programs**



I have had the privilege of working in public health for 14 years and it has been an enlightening and exhilarating experience. In particular, I have found health education and health promotion (HEHP), one of the cornerstones of public health, a very challenging and valuable service.

Every stage of life and every type of person or group can benefit from the prevention of illness and disability and control of disease by improving and maintaining healthy lifestyles. Consequently, HEHP is most effective when provided in a wide variety of settings, such as schools, churches, work, and doctor's offices and include such health issues as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, HIV, infant mortality, childhood obesity, and family planning.

Working with our community partners, the health department has worked to increase use of child car safety seats, playground safety, smoke detectors, mammography, Pap smears, HIV testing, proper nutrition, and smoking cessation.

In particular, our efforts to reduce the risk of heart disease in our residents recently won a national award from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) in "Confronting Health Disparities 2001".

The Piedmont Health District is committed to working with our community to improve the health and quality of life of all our residents.

# Secondhand Smoke and Children

**Children are more susceptible to the effects of secondhand smoke than adults because their lungs are still developing.** Secondhand smoke is a mixture of smoke given off by the burning end of a cigarette, pipe or cigar and the smoke that is exhaled from the lungs of the smoker.

**Home is the most significant place of exposure for children** because of the amount of time spent at home and because of progress made towards instituting smoking bans at school, daycare facilities and other public places. Fifteen million children are regularly exposed to secondhand smoke in their home.



**Health effects from secondhand smoke include:**

- ❑ **Lowering lung efficiency**, resulting in inflamed airways and increased mucus production. Children's smaller airways are more sensitive and more likely to result in wheezing or coughing. Lower respiratory infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia are a common result.
- ❑ **Inflammation of the tube connecting the nose to the middle ear (eustachian tube).** Swelling blocks natural drainage and fluid buildup in the middle ear leads to an increase number of ear infections.
- ❑ **Triggering an asthma attack** or possibly causing healthy children to develop asthma.
- ❑ **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**, the cause of which is not completely understood, has been associated with mothers who smoke. Two times more infants of women who smoked during pregnancy die from SIDS than infants of women who did not smoke. Recent studies suggest that exposure to secondhand smoke may increase an infant's risk of dying from SIDS.

## Childhood Asthma Epidemic

- ❑ Asthma is a chronic lung disease characterized by wheezing, coughing, chest tightness and breathlessness.
- ❑ It is a leading cause of children being absent from school.
- ❑ It is also a leading cause of hospitalizations for children.
- ❑ Up to six million children in the United States have asthma.
- ❑ The number of children with asthma has nearly doubled over the past several years.
- ❑ Secondhand smoke is a known trigger of asthma.
- ❑ Up to one million children with asthma have their condition made worse when exposed to secondhand smoke. They have more attacks and these attacks are often more severe.

**Goal: Increase the number of homes with children aged six and under where smoking is not allowed.**

## Eliminating Children's Secondhand Smoke

How you can make yours a "smoke-free" home:

- ❑ Ask that smokers only smoke outside.
- ❑ If a family member insists, ask that he or she open a window and smoke in rooms not frequently used.
- ❑ Let your policy be known. Post a "nonsmoking" magnet on the refrigerator and don't put out ashtrays.
- ❑ Do not smoke if children are present.
- ❑ Do not smoke in the car where space is extremely small and concentrations of smoke can be very high.
- ❑ Take the "Pledge to Make Your Home Smoke-Free" by calling 1-800-513-1157 and receive a free kit.

Please call your local health department or the American Cancer Society at (434) 978-7423 for information on how you and your family can quit smoking.

# Promoting Better Health for Young People Through Physical Activity and Sports

## A Report to the President From the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education

America loves to think of itself as a youthful nation focused on fitness. But behind the vivid media images of robust runners, Olympic Dream Teams, and rugged mountain bikers is the troubling reality of a generation of young people that is, in large measure, inactive, unfit, and increasingly overweight.

The consequences of the sedentary lifestyles lived by so many of our young people are grave. In the long run, **physical inactivity threatens to reverse the decades-long progress we have made in reducing death and suffering from cardiovascular diseases.** A physically inactive population is at increased risk for many chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke, colon cancer, diabetes, and osteoporosis.

**Physical inactivity has contributed to an unprecedented epidemic of childhood obesity.**

The percentage of young people who are overweight has doubled since 1980.

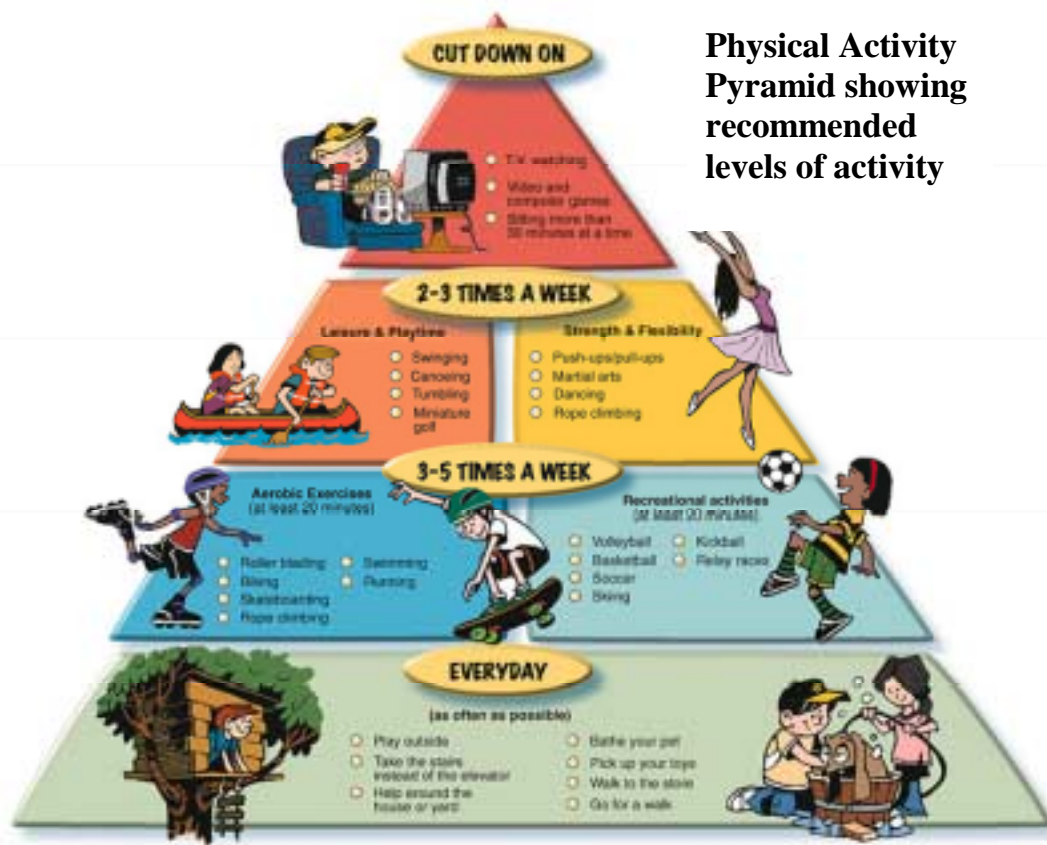
1. Of children aged 5 to 15 who are overweight, 61% have one or more **heart disease** risk factors, and 27% have two or more.
2. Obesity in adolescence also is associated with **poorer self-esteem** and with **obesity in adulthood.**

3. **Type 2 diabetes** was previously so rarely seen in children or adolescents that it came to be called “adult-onset diabetes.” Now, an increasing number of teenagers and preteens must be treated for diabetes.
4. The total costs of diseases associated with obesity have been estimated at almost \$100 billion per year, or approximately 8% of the national health care budget.

Healthy People 2010, the national health objectives for the decade, includes a set of 10 leading health indicators of high-priority public health areas. The fact that **the first leading health indicator is physical activity and the second is overweight and obesity** speaks clearly to the national importance of these issues.

Encourage your children to participate in physical activity and sports. **Get up and get moving.**

**Physical Activity Pyramid showing recommended levels of activity**



## Influenza and Pneumonia

Influenza and pneumonia kill about 2,000 Virginians each year and are the fifth or sixth leading cause of death in your county. Influenza reaches Virginia in force around Christmas and is the leading cause of emergency room visits and death throughout January.



The good news is that there are very safe and effective vaccines for influenza and pneumonia. The bad news is that, like last year, some of the flu vaccine is expected to be delivered later in the season. Luckily, we expect to have the complete supply of influenza vaccine well before the virus should come to our area.

People at high risk for complications from the flu should get the vaccine as soon as it comes out. Others should wait until the remaining batches come out, probably around Thanksgiving.

The flu virus changes each year, so previous vaccinations won't protect you. The pneumonia vaccine, though, may only need to be repeated every 7 years or so.

Your local health department will continue to update you on the status of our vaccine supply as the flu season progresses.

Piedmont Health District  
111 South Street, First Floor  
Farmville, VA 23901  
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

### Local Health Department Information

Piedmont Health District Office (434) 392-3984

David Goodfriend, MD, MPH, Acting Director

e-mail: [dgoodfriend@vdh.state.va.us](mailto:dgoodfriend@vdh.state.va.us)

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|----------------------|----------------|
| Amelia County        | (804) 561-2711 |
| Buckingham County    | (434) 969-4244 |
| Charlotte County     | (434) 542-5251 |
| Cumberland County    | (804) 492-4661 |
| Lunenburg County     | (434) 696-2346 |
| Nottoway County      | (434) 645-7595 |
| Prince Edward County | (434) 392-8187 |

### Please Visit Our Web Sites on the Internet:

Virginia Department of Health: [www.vdh.state.va.us](http://www.vdh.state.va.us)

Piedmont Health District:

[www.vdh.state.va.us/LHD/Piedmont/Piedmontmain.htm](http://www.vdh.state.va.us/LHD/Piedmont/Piedmontmain.htm)

You are at high risk if you:

- Are 65 years of age or older.
- Have a chronic medical condition, such as asthma, diabetes or diseases of the lung, heart, kidney, or blood.
- Have immune system problems.
- Will be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during flu season.
- Are 18 years or younger and receiving long-term aspirin therapy.
- Are in contact with people at high risk from influenza, such as a health-care worker or volunteer.